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KANT AND HEGEL IN THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY.

READ AT SARATOGA, N. Y., JULY 7TH, AND AT CONCORD, MASS., AUGUST 2D,
1881, BY WILLIAM T. HARRIS.

That Immanuel Kant is the greatest figure in modern philosophy there can be no doubt. One would say, in the same sense, that Socrates is the greatest figure in ancient philosophy. Not that the ideas of Socrates were not very immature compared with those of Plato and Aristotle, but that Socrates alone gives the immense impulse and the true direction, and the method which Plato and Aristotle elaborate and make fruitful. So Aristotle comes *after* Plato in greatness if we regard this matter of original discovery of ideas—but Aristotle towers much higher in the perspective of time as we look back down the ages of human thought. All scientific thinking in our Christian civilization is Aristotelian, and Aristotle is “The father of all those who know,” as Dante says in his “Inferno.”

So it is with Kant. We should not find in him the world-historical personage that we do if he had not been the impulse to raise up widely differing schools of thought, and carry philosophy far above and beyond the limits of the system which he presented to us in person. Socrates, according to the trustworthy portraiture of Xenophon, only practised *dialectic*, and sought to bring to consciousness the wide distinction between universal and particular cognitions and show the substantiality of what is universal. His endeavor was for the most part negative—a breaking down of the conceited wisdom of the Athenian professors. Plato made this arrival at general ideas something positive—an arrival at the eternal forms of created things—a reaching of the Divine.

Aristotle seized the standpoint which Plato reached in a few of his writings as his highest thought—that of the creative Intellect and Will—the identity of the Good and the Pure Thought, and with it, as his principle, consistently explained the worlds of Nature and Man as they presented themselves in the fourth century before our era to the Greek consciousness. Kant's significance in the world arises from the discoveries which he made in the realm of

Psychology, especially as regards the antithesis of Subject and Object in consciousness and their mutual limitations and interpenetrations. The importance of this investigation on the part of Kant depends upon the fact that modern consciousness is a movement, as a whole, towards inwardness and subjectivity, and, accordingly, modern philosophy is bound first of all to ask itself: "What is the criterion of certitude?" The Greek asked: "What is Truth?" If he could find the abiding, it was sufficient. Thales, for example, set up the principle that water or moisture is the fundamental abiding whence all originates and whither all goes. Anaxagoras set up *Noûs*—Reason—or the principle of the universal—as this abiding somewhat. The psychology of Plato and Aristotle is a sort of objective affair, treating the mind like the world, and finding within it what is transitory and fleeting and what is abiding. Aristotle discovers that the eternal substance of mind, its true form, is *Noûs Ποιητικός*—Self-active Reason.

Aristotle and Plato both classify correctly the various powers or faculties of the soul, and leave us correct statements of the scope of those faculties. Sense-perception, opinion, discursive reasoning, theoretical insight by aid of pure ideas—the "Seeing by totalities" (as Plato calls it)—these are expounded and their limits defined.

Aristotle's great distinction of the phases of life or soul into vegetative, feeling and rational, is the solid basis of all that has been thought on the subject.

But the problem of certitude could not be a problem to the ancient mind, though ancient philosophy gave the impulse that developed into this subjectivity in consciousness which now needs to enquire for the criterion of certainty. The Christian religion moves the soul in the same direction towards the learning to know the constitution of the soul as *subject*.

This subjective tendency of thought, which is the characteristic of modern times, leads to a peculiar species of scepticism—a scepticism based on a partial insight into method. Method is the form of activity. The modern tendency seeks to know the form of the mind's activity—all faculties of mind exist only as active. Hence the problem of certitude arises only when the mind is directed upon its own method or form of activity. If the insight into method is partial it cannot be sure of the results of mental activ-

ity. All wrong views of method lead to wrong philosophical views.

Not to dwell upon this position, but assuming it as granted, let us define the position of the work of Immanuel Kant as the Columbus in the voyage of discovery into the realm of method, using "method," in the largest sense of the term, as the form of all mental activity—the will, the intellect, and the heart, or emotional nature. Understanding the importance of method, and the fact that any glimpse into the forms of activity will give a basis of scepticism that no amount of objective philosophizing can remove, we see at once the significance of that philosophy which will explore method in its entire extent—map out the provinces of all mental activity. The Critique of Pure Reason attempts this work as regards the intellectual faculties, and accomplishes a vast result. The Critique of Practical Reason defines the forms of the Will, and the Critique of Judgment one of the functions of the emotional nature.

This insight into method, which is the want and necessity of the modern mind, is the object which Kant successfully pursues. It relates essentially to the antithesis already named—the subjective and objective—what pertains to the ego and constitutes its forms, and what pertains to the object as object. It regards all cognition as composed of two factors, and it investigates and defines them. The ancient thinking also had two factors to investigate in cognition, but it did not regard the one as subjective and the other objective. It defined one factor as the universal and the other as the particular; hence arose the structure of formal logic of Aristotle as the chief contribution on the part of ancient philosophy to the world's science.

All modern philosophy has sought to bring together in some way these two antitheses—(Subjective *versus* Objective, and Particular *versus* Universal)—and show their relation. The movement of modern philosophy developed negative results at first. The distinction of subjective *versus* objective seemed to destroy that of particular *versus* universal, and to reduce the universal to an arbitrary aggregate, or to a mere *flatus vocis*. The war between Realism and Nominalism has this great meaning in the history of philosophy and in Christian Theology—it is the first attempt to assert subjective *versus* objective against the Greek par-

ticular *versus* universal which tradition had brought down to the Middle Ages as the heirloom of speculative science. This accounts also for the great place which Aristotle's *De Anima* held in the controversy. The great Arabian commentators taught that the human mind is essentially *Noûs Παθητικός*, and hence not immortal, as individual human soul of John or James. That which differentiates—that which belongs to the particular—is perishable; the species lives, but the individual dies. Aristotle had shown how an individual may become an entelechy—that is to say, how a particular may unite within itself the attributes of the universal as a totality. Change and perishability happen because the particular is not adequate to the universal—the universal has *many* particular attributes or phases, while the special individual realizes only one, or at best some, of those phases. The process of the universal—and all true universals are active processes—annuls some of the particulars and realizes others; this changes the individuality, and it perishes or becomes another. Aristotle's entelechy is an individual that has realized within itself all of the potentialities, or phases, of the universal, and hence it possesses self-identity; its change does not change it; its activity is only the continuance of its function—a circular movement—what Hegel calls “a return into itself.” The “first entelechy” possesses this immortal individuality, and yet has not realized the universal within itself by self-development. The acorn possesses individuality—the universality or *species* of the oak is in it, but only potentially. When the acorn grows, it realizes *all* the phases of the oak that were potential in the acorn and becomes a “second entelechy” or species realized in the individual, so far as this can take place in the vegetable realm, or, as Aristotle calls it, in the “Nutritive Soul.” Such ascent from “first entelechy” to “second entelechy” is not as a fact possible except to the human soul, although the vegetable and animal souls manifest a *semblance* of it—a mere appearance of it in a sort of mimetic spectacle—the dramatic play simulating the ascent of the individual into the species—which is, however, only a *play*, and does not constitute an immortal individual as in the case of man. The great scholastic “fathers,” commencing with Albertus Magnus and Thomas Aquinas, gained this insight of Aristotle, and were able to defend Christianity against the Moslem pantheism which denied true universality to

human personality, or, in other words, denied that man as a subjective being could be essentially universal, and hence an immortal individual. The distinction of subject *versus* object had appeared only in the obscure form of nominalism at that early period. With the close of that period of the history of thought nominalism seems to have gained the ascendancy, and William of Occam marks its triumph. He also marks the utter eclipse of the great insight of Aristotle in theology, and a divorce of faith and reason.

It is one of the most mysterious phases in the history of Philosophy, this triumph of nominalism at the close of a most wonderful and most triumphant career of profound thinking—realistic thinking. Christian theology had been almost completed. Very little has been added, or is likely to be added, to the wonderful system left us by Thomas Aquinas—familiar to more people through Dante's *Divina Commedia* than through St. Thomas's *Summa*. The mystery clears up when we consider the momentous importance of seizing in its entire compass this antithesis of subjective *versus* objective, in philosophy. We discern the providential purpose in what seems to us at first dark and inscrutable. Christianity, alone among world-religions, makes the individual man worthy of immortal life in a continued *human* existence of growth in intellect, will, and love. For Christianity holds that God himself is Divine-Human. Hence the human being need not lose his humanity in approaching the absolute, or when he is placed "under the form of eternity"—*Sub specie eternitatis*—as Spinoza describes it.

If the human form is divine—the human mind being the image of the divine mind—it follows that to know the nature of the mind is to know in some sense the nature of God. In the two worlds—the world of man and the world of nature—we may find a revelation of God. In man—in our minds—we may find the adequate revelation in each individual—but not in each individual of nature; there it is found only in species and genera. The Christian doctrine of the infinite importance of each human soul and of the transcendence of the soul over all merely natural existences, through the fact of its immortal destiny, generates the impulse towards subjectivity as already asserted. It sets human consciousness over against nature: I am above and beyond nature—a soul

belonging to the supernatural order of existences. This leads to the perpetual recurrence of the antithesis of subjective *versus* objective, and by and by to the unfolding of all its negative phases. Nominalism, or the denial of the existence of universals, is the complete sum of all that is negative and sceptical in philosophy. It makes all that possesses abiding in the form of genera and species a product of the subjective synthesis of thought—a classification only for convenience. The reality consists of isolated individuals, each valid over against the other. The result of this is atomism, and the principle that “composition does not affect the parts or atoms of which things are composed.” When once reached it is impossible to explain anything by atomism without inducting a principle from the outside, a directing, arranging, combining intelligence which produces all that we find in the two worlds of nature and man. The atoms become pure simples—without properties in their isolation—and thus everything is transferred to the other factor in the world—to the ordering intelligence. Then the atoms become an empty fiction, utterly useless.

The only thing positive about nominalism is its attribution of all universality—of all abiding and substantial being to the subjective mind. It implies a great deal, but does not itself become aware of this wonderful endowment which it claims for the subjective mind.

It is wonderful to see how the most negative phases, the scepticisms, the heretical doctrines, the most revolutionary phases in history, all proceed from the same great principle of thought as the most positive and conservative doctrines, and that all of these negative things are destructive only in their undeveloped state and when partially seized. By and by they are drawn within the great positive movement, and we see how useful they are become. Through these negative and sceptical tendencies, arising from this great antithetic object of thought, the subjective *versus* the objective, we ascend into a knowledge of self-determining activity as it is in Mind, and this knowledge is far in advance of the old objective view of mind such as the world has inherited it from the Greeks. It is a proximate insight into the nature of the divine creative process itself. We ascend through a philosophic mastery of the relation between the modern and ancient antitheses—subject *versus* object and universal *versus* particular—to the plane

that is above all scepticism. Scepticism is directed only against method—this is its essential nature. With the sceptics of old, as Hegel points out, the doubt was objective, and touched the method (or transition) between the particular objects of sense and the universals cognized by reason. Modern scepticism touches the method (or transition) between subjectivity and objectivity. The ancient sceptic doubted or despaired of the truth of the objects of sense-perception. It seemed that they wore out and perished in the course of their process. They were all in a flux, becoming each moment something else, presenting new phases of their universals (or their total processes). Modern sceptics doubt the truth of the objects of reason—the universals—species and genera—and are unwilling to accord real being to aught but the objects of sense-perception—to the very objects which ancient scepticism doubted. A strange inversion of standpoints within the history of scepticism!

But the cause of this is the turning of the mind in upon itself for the truth—a partial movement in this direction producing doctrines in which there is utter disharmony between the two antitheses, respectively the objects of ancient and modern thought. It is a movement that justifies and will justify the doctrine of a Providence in History—a true Theodicy.

Up to the time of David Hume the outlook might have been dubious enough to the realistic thinker. Nominalism had begun to see the ultimate consequences of its subjective point of view. There is no causality in the world, so far as we know—only sequence in time. “All our knowledge consists of impressions of the senses, and the faint images of these impressions called up in memory and in thinking.” Even the Ego is only a subjective notion—a unity of the series of impressions called “myself.” This is the subjectivity *of* subjectivity.

This is the point in the development of modern philosophy at which Kant rises and offers his more complete sketch of our subjective nature as an explanation of the world of man, and the world in Time and Space.

His sketch of the nature of mind has become familiar to all persons who make a pretence of cultivating philosophy.

The Subjectivity of man, as Will, Emotion, or Intellect, has native forms of its own—forms not derived from experience or from

anything external. These forms make up the constitution of the mind itself. If we wish to know the truth we must be aware of the subjective factor in knowledge and make due allowance for it. Things-in-themselves are modified (in our cognition of them) through the constitution of the mental faculties that know them. What we actually know of things-in-themselves will be ascertained only after we eliminate from our cognitions the subjective element due to our mental forms.

All this was so simple and in accordance with the spirit of the subjective scepticism of the pre-Kantian period that it would have recommended itself at once as the best of good sense.

But who can paint the amazement of subjective scepticism when it first begins to comprehend the Critique of Pure Reason! It looks over the inventory of the possessions of our Subjectivity—"the forms of our mind"—and sees

Time, Space, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Modality, God, Freedom, Immortality, the Beautiful, the Just, and the True! It takes away one's breath to see such things written down in the inventory of what is our subjective constitution. How rich we are!! "Ah, but all these are only subjective." "They do not apply to any object in itself, whatever; not even to the Ego-in-itself." "You cannot think your Ego as an object-in-itself because you cannot think it except in these categories. These categories apply to objects thought, but not to the subject thinking, as a thing-in-itself."

Well, we reply, what of that? What is the net result when we take all this into account?

To take this into account it was necessary to recall the great insight of Aristotle, and review ancient philosophy in the light of this Kantian discovery of the nature of subjectivity. After Socrates, came first Plato and then Aristotle; the third philosopher could *use* the philosophical insight which the first and second had jointly discovered and elaborated. So it was this time. Fichte and Schelling developed respectively the practical and æsthetic phases of Kantianism, Fichte unfolding those subtle phases of mental activity by which the mind determines itself as universal categories or forms of thought—Time, Space, Causality, and Substantiality—the fourfold form of reflection superinduced upon mere feeling or sensation. Schelling devoted his attention to the

explanation of the world as a phenomenon of which the constitution of our mind is the noumenon. Here the pure Kantian movement begins to impinge upon the ancient view of the world—the classic world of Art and Philosophy. In the school of Schelling, Hegel first appeared. He is the first one of the post-Kantians to take up the Aristotelian philosophy and perceive its profound truth. He is the first one to draw parallels from the psychological, subjective basis of Kantianism to the vast objective, world-comprehending system of Aristotle. It is Hegel's advice that has been followed in Germany, now that in each university of that country there are from one to five courses on Aristotle's philosophy given each semester! Even the attacks against Hegelianism which have arisen in Germany came chiefly from the Aristotelian studies inaugurated by Hegel, and not a single new insight or great idea in Aristotle has been added by any one of Hegel's Aristotelian opponents to the list of those ideas and insights inventoried by Hegel himself in his *History of Philosophy*! Even Trendelenburg, who blamed Hegel for using *Bewegung*—(which we may in English translate by the word "activity")—in his logical treatment of the categories of "Pure thought," and accused him of borrowing the idea from experience, and yet tried to establish *Bewegung* as a category of pure thought in his own system, has no acknowledgment to make for assistance obtained through Hegel's explanation of Aristotle, and often, indeed, fails himself to see Aristotle's deep thoughts where they have been fully expounded!

Hegel's significance in the history of philosophy consists in the fact that he mastered the Greek philosophy, and did not, at the same time, recede from the Kantian.

Hegel ascends to a standpoint wherein are united the two antitheses which lead, respectively, the ancient and the modern worlds of thought—the antithesis of subjective *versus* objective, and the other antithesis of the universal *versus* particular. Hegel does not reconcile the two antitheses by omission or suppression; he finds that Kant maintains a subjective result simply through an inconsistent application of his own principles, by which he surreptitiously made objective use of his categories, while claiming for them subjective application exclusively. If made consistent throughout, and the Fichtean discovery of the deduction of the

categories superadded, the Kantian system falls into perfect harmony with the system of ancient thought, and philosophy becomes doubly firm on its twofold foundation of psychology and ontology.

The insight into Aristotle's thought of the unity of all potentialities in the true actuality, the thought of the entelechies, makes for Hegel the great luminous principle to which he always returns for light to explain all problems. With it he newly defines the thought of *Begriff* (German word for what the English call the "Notion," and we Americans "the logical concept," or simply "the concept") as the total of form of a thing or being. The "Begriff" is the complex of the entire round of potentialities, and signifies much the same as Aristotle's $\tau\acute{o} \tau\grave{\alpha} \eta\nu \epsilon\acute{\iota}ναι$. Having the *Begriff* as signifying the *Totality of Form*, he finds the highest category to be the self-determining Reason, which he calls *Idea* (German *Idee*). Here is Aristotle's $\nu\acute{o}\eta\sigma\iota\varsigma \nu\acute{o}\eta\sigma\epsilon\omega\varsigma$, as Hegel himself tells us.

In other words, Hegel has discovered that Kant's Subjective constitution of the Mind is only hypothetically Subjective. In reality it is subjective, and objective too. For considering the wonderful character possessed by those categories which Kant inventories as the forms of the mind, it is almost impossible to regard Kant's claim of pure subjectivity for them as other than a deep piece of irony. As if he had said:

"Scepticism is right. We can never get at the Truth and know things as they really are—things-in-themselves.

"We can know only what is radically modified through our own subjective spectra; but look and behold what these subjective forms are, and learn to subtract them and find the remainder, which is the true Thing-in-itself.

"In the first place there are Time and Space: these are the forms of the Sensory, and are purely subjective. It is true that they are the logical conditions of the existence of what we call the World of Nature. They are more objective than the world of nature is, because they are its logical condition. That is the way we know Time and Space to be Subjective, and to belong to our mind only.

"This makes the science of mathematics possible. The world in-time-and-space, it seems, then, is subjective because the very

logical condition of it is subjective. True, we have called it 'objective,' and have been satisfied if our subjectivity attained validity throughout all time and space. Nevertheless, if we are to make serious business of inventorying our subjective possessions, we must begin with writing down Time and Space at the head of the list.

"True enough, things-in-themselves, deprived of time and space, will never trouble us nor anybody else—for, you see, they cannot have extension nor change. Yes, it is worse off for them than that. They cannot have unity, nor plurality, nor totality, hence they cannot be spoken of as 'they'—it is a courtesy on our part to lend them our subjective category of 'plurality' to which they are not entitled. Nor can the thing in itself (singular or plural) have quality or existence for anything else—nor relation, nor mode of being either as possibility or necessity, or even as *Existence*. The 'thing-in-itself' cannot *exist* without borrowing one of our subjective categories (found under 'modality'). As for the objective, then, which is opposed to our subjectivity and unknowable by us, it cannot be found in the world of nature or in the world of man. It is a pure figment of the imagination, and cannot exist in any possible world without becoming 'subjective' at once."

In fact, Kant's subjective has taken up within it the entire antithesis of subjective and objective as understood by scepticism, and has become purely universal through the fact that its forms are universals. Such a subjective mind is Aristotle's *νόησις νοήσεως* and a Self-Knowing Being. Whether Kant intended it or not, his remarks on things-in-themselves and on the limits of our knowledge make no sense unless they are taken as ironical.

Hegel has treated again and again the system of Kant in the course of his works, praising its wonderful features and criticising its inconsistencies and its mechanical presumptions. In his history of Philosophy he does justice to the significance of the system in relation to preceding ones. In his large logic he discusses in appropriate places (a) Kant's idea of the construction of matter out of Attraction and Repulsion; (b) Kant's theory of Time, Space, and Matter as regards divisibility or indivisibility; (c) The application of degree, or intensive quantity to the soul; (d) The so-called "Synthetic judgments *a priori*;" (e) The limitation of the world

in space; (f) Kant's "Thing-in-itself"; (g) Infinite divisibility or atomic nature of matter; (h) The beginning of the world in Time; (i) The paralogism involved in the proof of the nature of the soul. In his philosophy of Religion he discusses in full the Kantian refutation of St. Anselm's famous proof of the Existence of a God. Hegel's thought of the "Begriff" as the totality of potentialities, and of the *Idee*, as the absolute Totality, enables him to rescue St. Anselm's proof from the Kantian objections (which are not unlike the objections brought up by Gaunilo in the lifetime of St. Anselm himself).

For convenience, as it seems, Hegel has brought together his chief criticisms on Kant in the "Second Attitude of Thought towards the Objective World," contained in his Introduction to his Logic in the *Encyclopædia*, and so admirably rendered into vernacular English by Mr. Wallace.

The limits of my paper prevent me from quoting largely from Hegel's own writings, and from attempting to expound some of his more subtle polemics.

I must refer to one more thought of Hegel—and it is also a thought of Aristotle: it is that universality is always self-particularizing, for it is self-determination. He always condemns the indefinite, indeterminate Absolute as empty. Hence his thought does full justice to European, Christian philosophy as against all orientalism and pantheism.

With a general reference to the full details of Hegel's critique of Kant, found in Wallace's translation above referred to, I must close this paper without attempting more than this statement of Kant's Significance in the struggle between ancient and modern thought, and of Hegel's position as the one who harmonizes Greek and German thought.